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**DR. ASHOK DHOBLE**  
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January 7, 2008

**Dr Anbumani Ramadoss**

Hon'ble Minister for Health & Family Welfare  
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare,  
Government of India  
Nirman Bhawan  
Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi

Sub: Formulation of National Oral Health Policy by Indian Dental Association along with major stakeholders

Respected Sir,

We are proud to inform you that Indian Dental Association (IDA) is a premier and largest non-governmental organization of oral health professionals & dental hygienist in our country, spread over 28 States in over 200 Branches. The Association through its dedicated members conducts various community related activities (with special focus on disadvantaged population) towards the improvement of oral health amongst the countrymen. The goal of IDA has been to spread awareness & inculcate good oral hygiene practices among the population as it still remains the best alternative, considering the expensive cost of oro-dental treatment involved & the huge population of our country.

We would also like to draw your kind attention towards the fact that we through our well structured programs are targeting the high risk groups as well. We are highly involved in the following areas:

- School Oral Health Promotion (Screening/provision of treatment)
- Awareness generation through community camps
- Tobacco Free Initiatives (Advocacy/Training/Tobacco Cessation Activities)

Encouraged by the tremendous success of the National Workshop on "Strategic Evaluation and Future Planning for Dental Personnel Resource Development" and "Oral Health Care Strategic planning" in previous years which was well supported by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, IDA started a countrywide Oral Health Survey covering 1.25 million people including children from 40 cities, 500 villages, 5000 schools and 120 government and private offices across 27 states in the country. This Oral Health Survey is almost on the verge of completion.

I would like to draw your kind attention on the important issue of National Oral Health Policy. In order to combat the ever increasing burden of Oro-dental diseases, Govt. of India started to think about a comprehensive Oral Health Programme with special emphasis on primary prevention. ***Towards this objective, Oral Health Policy was drafted with the help of Indian Dental Association and was accepted in principal as a part of National Health Policy during the Fourth Conference of Central Council of Health & Family Welfare in the year 1995.***

However, Health Policy for 2002 does not have any documentation regarding Oral Health. Your goodself would agree that in absence of a well structured oral health policy document:

1. Priority for oral disease burden cannot be addressed
2. Oral health fraternity cannot be fully utilized in concurrence with the global goals 2020
3. Correct projection for dentist: population & dentist: hygienist cannot be undertaken
4. Actual need & geographical distribution of oral health schools (Read dental colleges) cannot be ascertained
5. The curriculum as per the practical & realistic needs of the people cannot be drafted
6. Govt. health infrastructure (Sub-center/Primary Health Center/ Community Health Center/District Hospitals/Tertiary care) cannot be strengthened in regards to oral health professionals & infrastructure
7. Structured school & community oral health (with special emphasis on rural health) program cannot be envisaged, which not only targets at oral health awareness in school children, teachers & community but also provides intervention wherever required
8. Best dietary practices as regards to children & youth cannot be framed
9. Integration of oral health into general health, thus adopting a Common Risk Factor Approach cannot be adopted
10. Original research in the field of oral health cannot be given a thrust
11. Public private partnership cannot be addressed properly

Recently, the efforts have been made in this direction by organizing a meeting in Hyderabad during the International Symposium conducted by Indian Society for Dental Research, which was well supported by Ministry of Health & World Health Organization. The outcome of this meeting recommends having subsequent brain storming sessions to draft definitive recommendations for National Oral Health Policy.

**At this juncture IDA would like to play an important role by taking along all the major stakeholders i.e. Dental Council of India, All Dental Speciality Associations, Association of Dental Industry & Trade in India and NGOs (Health), above all the accountability to provide the Government with a final draft National Oral Health Policy within a specified time.**

**You shall be glad to know that IDA in its National Conference of 2008 is holding special session where all the major stakeholders would be brainstorming on this very important issue.** The proposed expert group meeting will be the part of the chain of events in this direction. It is expected that this meeting will be attended by public health experts and several other relevant professionals, who would help in generation of a policy document.

The recommendations of these meetings would help the government in having a National Oral Health Policy which would further be helpful in implementation of planning of National Programs. The primary objectives of these meeting would be:

1. Formulation of a Draft National Oral Health Policy for India
2. Formulation of this document in line with the Global Goals for Oral Health 2020

**Indian Dental Association would be appreciating your kind support in this important endeavour & would request your good self to instruct your good office for their valuable support in technical matters.**

A detailed proposal as regards to timelines & sequence of events would be submitted to you for perusal.

**A letter of support in this regard would be highly appreciated.**

Thanking you

Sincerely

**For Indian Dental Association**



**Dr Ashok Dhoble**

Hon. Secretary General

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